

NEWS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

(Written by J. S. Hubbard, Executive Secretary Missouri Press Association. Week ending Sept. 9.)
Jefferson City, Mo., Sept. 8.—Only citizens of the United States, over the age of twenty-one, will have the right to vote in Missouri after the adoption of the new constitution, as provided by the report of the Committee on Suffrage and Elections and adopted by the convention. The change from the old constitution provision is that foreigners who have taken out only their first papers will not be allowed to vote. They must become fully naturalized citizens of the United States, which means at least five years' residence, and reside in the state a year. Idiots and insane persons are added to the list of ineligible, while a specific provision gives the right of suffrage to inmates of soldiers' and sailors' homes.

Provision is made by the committee report for the opening of ballots in grand jury investigations and in the trial of all cases, either civil or criminal, in which the violation of any of the election laws, including elections for the nomination of candidates for any office, is under investigation or at issue. Under the present constitution the ballot box can only be opened in case of a contested election.

Another provision of the report, as amended by the convention, makes it mandatory on the legislature to provide for registration of voters in all cities and counties having a population of 100,000 or more and in all cities of 10,000 or more located in counties having a population of less than 100,000. The committee report made it optional with the legislature for registration in the smaller cities, and many hours were spent in discussion and several amendments and substitutes were offered and voted down, but the provisions in brief as stated here were finally adopted by the committee of the whole. The section will still be open to amendment when it comes up for final vote in the convention.

The absent-voter section of the old constitution has been changed, reserving the mandatory provision to apply to those engaged in military service and making it permissible for the legislature to provide the same privilege to other absentees, but limiting it to those within the state.

The literacy test proposed by the committee, qualifying the right to vote, met with much opposition and will probably not be adopted unless some plan is proposed that will insure to every person in the state, white or Negro, an opportunity to learn to read and write the English language. It was pointed out that there were hundreds living in scattered and sparsely settled localities who did not now enjoy the privilege, especially Negro families, nor allowed to go to any but schools for their own race, and these not available.

The proposal for a modification of the present state-wide open primary, which the committee reported as a separate or alternative proposition, was still to be settled as the week drew to a close. While many are opposed to the primary system as it is at present operating, opposition is so marked that the convention seems disposed to move slowly in providing marked changes.

For the most part the committee report has stood the test of a week's bombardment and with but small changes will probably be approved by the committee of the whole. The principal changes from the report were made on the absent voter and registration sections, and in dealing with illegal voting.

Outstanding features of the report, which the Committee on Executive and Ministerial Departments has submitted to the convention, are its provisions for a budget system and a systematic plan of departmental organization which will simplify and co-ordinate the administrative machinery of the State Government, and which the committee has provided because of the outspoken demand for such simplification in the interest of economy. The committee believes that these two features will provide means for the saving of millions of dollars within a few years. The need for a budget or some similar system is pointed out by the committee report in showing that the state expenses increased from \$1,191,000 in 1875 to \$14,735,000 in 1920, or an increase of more than 1,200 per cent. In that same period of time the taxable wealth of the state had only increased 600 per cent and the population but 200 per cent. The committee believes that a budget system of state finances is the only way to keep expenditures properly adjusted within income; to insure more careful consideration of appropriation measures, and place responsibility where it belongs.

Against the present seventy-odd boards and commissions, disconnected and without apparent responsibility, the committee would establish a system of civil departments not more than twelve in number. Of these, four are named by the committee, state, law, audits and accounts, and treasury. The other eight, or less, are left to the legislature to name. These departments are to be under the supervision and regulation of the legislature. Subject to such limitations contained in this constitution, the general assembly may from time to time assign by law new powers and functions to departments, officers, boards, or commissions contained or created under the constitution, and may also increase, modify or diminish their powers and functions. The secretary of state, attorney-general, state auditor and state treasurer will head the four departments named by the committee. These officers will continue to be elected by vote of the people.

The pardoning power of the governor will be modified should another provision of the committee prove acceptable to the convention. It provides that the governor shall have the power to grant reprieves, but in the case of commutation of sentence and pardons he must have the consent of a majority of the board of prison

control or such other agency as may be created by law for this purpose. The intention is in this way to relieve the governor of some responsibility in granting pardons to please political friends especially on the eve of his retiring from office.

No other changes of importance are made in the committee report on Article V of the old constitution.

In the report made to the convention by the Bill of Rights Committee important changes are the abolishing of capital punishment; simplifying the form of indictment by adding the words, "that the indictment or information shall state in plain and concise language the facts constituting the alleged offense;" adding the state motto, "Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto," to section 1; amending the section relating to the freedom of speech, by omitting from the end the words, "and the jury under the direction of the court shall determine the law and the fact;" providing means for the legislature to enact laws to imprison men for willful non-payment of judgments rendered for maintenance or support of dependent wives and minor children; making trial by jury to apply in all actions at law, either civil or criminal, whether arising under the common law or any statute; by providing that the legislature may authorize a trial by a jury of a less number than twelve jurors, except in felony cases; and may provide by law that less than the whole number of jurors may return a verdict, except in criminal cases; by authorizing the legislature to provide for a grand jury of less than twelve jurors and that less than the whole number of grand jurors may return an indictment or true bill; and by providing that grand juries shall not be convened except upon an order of a judge of a court of record having criminal jurisdiction; and adding the new section, "The right of citizens of Missouri to vote or hold office shall not be denied or abridged on account of race, color or sex."

The proposal providing that "The reading of the Bible shall not be excluded from the public schools of the state," is returned without recommendation as it met with a tie vote in the committee. Proposal No. 234, providing that "The labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce," is also returned without recommendation for the same reason.

Three minority reports have been filed. The first recommends the adoption of proposal No. 173, which provides that "The right of appeal, except by the state in criminal cases, shall not be denied by any nisi prius court in this state." The second changes the freedom of speech section so that every person shall be free to say, "and by any mode of expression or reproduction, to freely publish his ideas, opinions and sentiments on all subjects whatsoever," which is much more liberal than the existing section. The third relates to churches holding property for other than for church edifices, parsonages and cemeteries, the contention being made that churches should be allowed to hold property for other purposes in entire harmony with their work; also dissents from the majority report on the indictment section, and opposes the abolishing of the death penalty.

The most important change proposed by the Committee on State Officers and Salaries in its report to the convention deals with the duties of the governor and a provision for a "Public Safety Contingent Fund." It is provided in section 6 that "The governor shall take care that the laws are distributed and faithfully executed; and he shall be a conservator of the peace throughout the state, and to that end he is authorized and directed in cases of emergency to employ such number of executive agents, who shall be citizens of the State of Missouri, as he may deem necessary from time to time to keep him informed as to the health, peace, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the state. The legislature is directed at each biennial session to appropriate for a fund established, and to be known as the 'public safety contingent fund,' such an amount as the governor may deem necessary, not to exceed \$50,000 to carry out the duties prescribed for the governor. The governor is allowed to pay out from time to time such sums from this fund for other expenses, in cases of emergency, as he may deem necessary to promote the general welfare of the citizens of the state. Any money in this fund unexpended at the end of the biennial period will revert to the general revenue fund."

Several minor changes are made by the committee made necessary by the addition of women to the voting population and also recognizing their right to hold office. The matter of salaries for state officers, which the committee considered, was finally passed on to the legislature, which is directed to establish the salaries by law.

Report that the Committee on Taxation proposed limiting St. Louis to a rate of 60 cents on the hundred dollars valuation for city purposes and 30 cents for county purposes brought a hurry-up visit from Mayor Kiel and Deputy Comptroller Felix E. Gunn of St. Louis, who declared that the city would be unable to exist under such limitation. They stated that at present they were collecting \$1.27 for city and county and would need more another year as their police force would have to be increased materially. Including the school tax it was stated that the city had a tax rate of only \$3.00 on the hundred valuation, which was lower than any other large city in the country. Under the limitations of the old constitution the city of St. Louis is limited to \$1 on the hundred valuation for city purposes and 35 cents for county purposes. The officials agreed that if the committee would fix the limitation at \$1 and 30 cents respectively, with a provision for an additional levy of 25 cents by a majority vote of the people, it would be satisfactory. The committee took the matter change suggested in the report it will submit to the convention.

The attention of Mayor Kiel was called to the fact that only 7 per cent



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Early autumn is an ideal time to visit St. Louis—either by rail or motor. The parks in their autumn colorings are beautiful. Shaw's Garden, with its floral wonders and greatest collection of plant life in America, is at its best. The St. Louis Zoo, with its "cageless" bear pits and queer animals, is interesting to young and old. The St. Louis Art Museum holds much of interest to art lovers. The many fall festivities, including the picturesque pageant of the Veiled Prophet, the first week in October, will be very entertaining.

Shop Profitably in St. Louis

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of the bonds, notes and stocks in St. Louis were assessed while in the state at large as high as 75 per cent were assessed. The committee thought that if the city was more diligent in uncovering this hidden wealth it would have ample property valuation to raise revenue at the 60 cent rate. Mayor Kiel said that was a hard matter to accomplish, but that \$5,000,000 increase had been made in the past year in uncovering this wealth in hiding.

The Committee on Taxation proposes to classify property so that the intangible wealth, such as money, notes, stocks and bonds may be taxed at a lower rate than real and personal property. It believes that such a plan would bring a greater amount of intangible property out of hiding and the burden would be lightened to the owner of real and personal property.

The proposal that counties, cities and towns may be allowed to levy a tax of not more than ten cents on the hundred dollars valuation for the purpose of establishing public libraries, by a majority vote of the people, is still under consideration by the committee. It has met with much favor from some and may be included in the committee report.

THE PRESIDENT TAKES A CHANGE OF FRONT

According to Washington correspondents our President is getting mighty sick of his job. He is not the same courteous, care-free man he was when he entered the White House. He is growing peevish in conversation, he "bawls out" reporters, a sort of press censorship is hinted at, he has thrown tighter lines around his companionships and he rests more and more on the advice of one Lasker who, it will be remembered, is the gentleman directing Uncle Sam's Shipping Board bootlegging operations on the high seas. In fact, some Washingtonians have grown so sarcastic as to recall certain incidents in the reign of the late Czar Nicholas of Russia and refer to Lasker as the Rasputin of the Harding administration.

In a way all this is pitiful. It is not unusual to see Washington tire of a President. That city hails each new executive as the greatest man of the age and damns him as a "dud" six months after he has taken office. But it is distressing to see Harding, himself, show such a startling change.

Ever since the last Chicago Convention we have maintained that Harding is a pleasant gentleman of no especial ability who was elevated to high position through the workings of a Republican machine. We have never doubted Harding's desire to do right but we had never thought he had the capacity or the ability to meet the problems which confront the chief executive of the nation. Time has shown that we were right. The problems which confront Harding

are great but they dwindle into nothingness compared with the tasks which were undertaken by the man who preceded him in office. When Woodrow Wilson, after piloting our nation through the greatest war of all times, failed in health, his illness evoked only sneers and ribes from the leaders of the Republican party in this nation.

Now that Harding, confronted with fewer and far less perplexing problems, shows signs of fatigue, let us, as Democrats, show the Republicans of the nation that we can be better sports—better gentlemen, if you please—than they were a few years back. Let us be tolerant toward the President, let us refrain from unkind personal remarks.

We cannot, of course, defend Harding's policies—if he has any. It is not our duty to explain away his mistakes or to, for a single second, condone the actions of the Republican Congress. There is no need for us to forget that eighteen months of the Harding administration has been a miserable failure; there is every need for us to work unceasingly for Democratic success in the November elections.

But while we are working, while we are fighting let us be good sports. The Republicans, while Woodrow Wilson was in the White House, were not good sports. Let us show them up.—State Journal.

THE POOREST RECORD YET

While the farmers of the United States are losing money most every time they make a sale of their products there are people in the world who are suffering because of high food prices and according to Frank A. Vanderlip, noted banker and economist, there is likely to be an upsurge in Germany this winter because of the high prices of food.

Why it is that people in one section of the world are in want of food when those in another are growing poorer each day for the lack of a price for the things which they produce is enough to cause men to stop and ponder.

How can it be that the people of Germany can't secure food because of the prohibitive prices and the people of the United States can hardly live because of the low prices for which their products sell and the high values placed on the things they purchase?

A system or a government that will permit such is all wrong and cannot endure for long and in all probability will be rebuked by the voters of the country on Tuesday, November 7, next, when the record of President Harding goes to the solemn referendum of those who have been misgoverned by a kindly old man who was selected for that reason by the few who want to control the country.

We were promised that everything would come out all right when Warren G. Harding was placed at the head of the government together with a

Republican Congress to enact laws which would be recommended, but we can all testify that instead of growing better things are much worse and bid fair to continue so until there is some constructive policy inaugurated in Washington.

The Harding administration and Republican party went in with all the pomp and ceremony and more promises than any administration that has ever been known in the country.

In an editorial headed "Broken Promises," which is published in the Neosho Times, ten promises of the Republican party which have not been fulfilled are given. The ten promises are disposed of as follows: "Ten Republican Promises, all sounding fine, An 'Association of Nations' they failed to form—then there were Nine.

"Nine Republican Promises, 'Farm relief for every state!' The Emergency Tariff fooled farmers to death—then there were Eight.

"Eight Republican Promises, their falseness smelling to Heaven. The High Cost of Living they failed to reduce—then there were Seven.

"Seven Republican Promises, 'Fair railroad rates we will fix.' The Esch-Cummins Bill was the result—then there were Six.

"Six Republican Promises, 'All business we will revive.' But industry is still depressed—and then there were Five.

"Five Republican Promises, 'Ex-Servicemen to the fore!' They failed to pass the Bonus Bill—then there were Four.

"Four Republican Promises, 'Tax burdens much lighter shall be.' They shifted the taxes from rich to poor—then there were Three.

"Three Republican Promises, 'Great Economies we will push through.' A billion more dollars the Government has spent—then there were Two.

"Two Republican Promises, 'Unemployment we'll put on the run.' There are more idle men than ever before—so that left only One.

"One Lone Republican Promise still to be kept, was it done? They are haggling still over Tariff rates—so, bless you, now there are NONE!

"Not one Republican promise has this 'Do-Nothing' Congress put through! Now, I don't think a party like this should be kept in power, do YOU?"

The Republican administration must go to the people on the present business conditions and the broken promises. Talk of the future for a possible remedy is like tossing a straw to a drowning man and will be considered by the voters about as long as it will take them to denounce those who will be like the guilty criminal at the bar of justice seeking a continuance for it will be only a delay in the inevitable they are seeking. In this connection it may be well to remember these lines from Shakespeare:

"The patient dies while the physician sleeps;

"The orphan pines while the op-

pressor feeds;
"Justice is feeding while the widow weeps."

—State Journal.

NOT YET PERFECT

The venerable and learned president of the American Federation of Labor, the Hon. Samuel Gompers, has recently congratulated organized labor upon the fact that since the armistice the average pay cut of union workers is less than five per cent.

Few men have had longer, more honorable, or more constructive careers than Mr. Gompers. Through his common sense, administrative ability and vision, organized labor has grown and prospered. He has made few mistakes and always recovered from those.

But Mr. Gompers is not perfect; no human being is. And when he exults officially at the fact that organized labor has succeeded in holding off the day of complete return to normalcy, and has managed to keep its average wage at a point only five per cent below war-time levels, he is flying in the face of the whole American people, of which his organization is a part.

Chairman Martin B. Madden, of the House Appropriations Committee, has just returned from abroad, and stated that he was most impressed with the willingness of the foreign workman to take the cut in wages made necessary by readjustment. Will some one versed in the relative brain power of the foreign and the American workman explain why the Englishman, the Frenchman, the German, the Belgian can see through the immutable economic laws which govern all industry and commerce, and the American workman can not?

The price of anything is dictated by its cost. Its cost is the labor cost; the raw material cost is but labor cost under another name. Prices are high because labor is scarce or high priced. Labor is not scarce here; we have more men than there are jobs. Prices will come down when labor comes down and not before. Normalcy will return when labor prices, as well as all other prices, are permitted to observe the law of supply and demand. Unions, organizations, laws, special privilege, may hold them up for a while, and permit Mr. Gompers to exult. Eventually they must, like water, find their natural level. The further that time is off the more the bulk of American people suffer, while the few are congratulated upon successfully resisting the will, the desire, and the right of the hundred and ten millions of men, women, and children who are the American people.

Unightly black patches, which mar the appearance of concrete roads after repair work has been done, will be avoided by the use of a material for the purpose developed by the Department of Agriculture. It has the same color as concrete and consists of 12 parts resin and one part crude rubber, with sufficient barium sulphate to give the desired color.